Using Aahaad Hadith in Matters of Aqeedah

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Mutawaatir vs. Aahaad - Definitions

Mutawaatir refers to a hadith whose narrators in each level of its chain of transmission are so numerous that it is not possible for all of them to have conspired in falsehood - whether intentionally or mistakenly. The aahaad is a hadith that does not meet the requirement for the mutawaatir hadith.

The scholars of hadith differ over the number of narrators (from three to more than twenty) that are essential to declare a hadith to be mutawaatir.

Establishing Beliefs with aahaad?

In the past, some latecomers in knowledge (as compared to the salaf of the Sahaabah and the great scholars of Islaam) have alleged that, the hadith aahaad cannot be used to establish matters of `aqidah (beliefs) . Listed below are some replies from the scholars of hadith for all who carry such a claim.

This is an innovated statement (bid`ah) which has no basis in the Shari`ah (Islaamic Law).

This statement is itself a matter of `aqidah (belief). Based on this very principle, one would need a mutawaatir proof to establish it. However, there is no proof for it in the Qur'aan, or the authentic Sunnah - not even from among the aahaad hadiths!

If there were any such proof for this claim, it would have been known to the Companions who would have implemented it. The righteous scholars who followed them would have also known and implemented it.

This statement is in direct opposition to the method of seeking the knowledge adopted by the Companions of the Messenger (S). We find that if one of them narrates something from the Messenger (S), the other who heard it would accept it from him.

Allaah (T) said (what means):

And it is not proper that all of the believers should go out to fight. From each party [taa'ifah] of them, only a division should go forth, so that they (who are left behind) may receive instructions in religion, and that they may warn their people when they return to them, so that they may be aware. [9:122]

This address by Allaah (T) is fardh kifaayah, i.e. binding on the entire community and

must be performed by at least a few of its members. Thus, someone must stay behind to teach others the religion. There is no doubt that the term religion in the above aayah includes both matters of legislation as well as creed. In this aayah Allaah uses the word taa'ifah which means one or more than one, as Ibn ul-Athir stated in an-Nihaayah. Al-Bukhaari said (in his Sahih), One man is called taa'ifah in Allaah's saying (that means):

If two parties [ta'ifataan] among the believers fight (each other)... [49:9]

So if two men fight, the meaning of this aayah applies to their situation as well. Ibn Hajar said in Fath ul- Baari, The word taa'fah means one or more than one, and is not a specific number; this is what is reported from Ibn `Abbaas and others like an-Nakh`i and Mujaahid.

Items of Belief Founded on Aahaad

Primarily, all hadiths are divided into two categories: authentic and unauthentic. So when a scholar declares, If there is an authentic hadith, it is my madthab (way and belief), he is not distinguishing between mutawaatir and ahaad hadiths.

The following are examples of matters of creed which are accepted by the righteous salaf and the great scholars of this Ummah as being part of the Creed of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah even though they are founded on aahaad hadiths.

- The statement that Aadam (S) is a Prophet, as well as others besides him who are not mentioned in the Qur'aan.
- The fact that our Prophet Muhammad (S) is favored by Allaah (T) above all the other Prophets and Messengers.
- The Great Intercession of the Messenger (S) on the Day of Judgement.
- His (S) intercession for the people of this Ummah who committed major sins.
- All the miracles of the Messenger (S) other than the Qur'aan.
- Matters relating to the beginning of the creation.
- The description of the angels, the jinn, the Jannah, and Janaham (the Fire).
- The belief that both the Jannah and the Fire are presently existing.
- The belief that the Black Stone is a stone from the Jannah.
- The belief that the Prophet (S) looked into al-Jannah and saw all that Allaah has prepared for the pious believers.
- The belief that ten (10) companions of the Messenger (S) were specifically promised the Jannah.
- The belief that everyone will be questioned in his grave by two angels.
- The belief in the punishment in the grave.
- The belief that the Scale (al- Meezaan) which weighs the deeds on the Day of Judgement has two pans.
- The belief in the Bridge (as-Siraat) which stretches over Jahanam.
- The belief in the Fountain (al-Kawthar) of the Messenger (S), and that whoever drinks once from it on the Day of Judgement will never thirst after that.
- The belief that seventy thousand (70,000) members of the Ummah of Muhammad

(S) would enter the Jannah without reckoning.

- The belief in the good and evil consequences of al-Qadar.
- The belief that Allaah has written for everyone his happiness, his sadness, his provision, and the time of his death.
- The belief that a Muslim who commits a major sin will not abide in Jahanam forever.
- The belief in the Pen that was created by Allaah, and that He commanded it to write everything that will occur.
- The belief that Allaah (T) has prohibited the earth from eating the bodies of the Messengers.

Conclusion

After reading this important discussion, we hope that it leaves us much surer of:

The meaning of the term hadith aahaad.

The danger of not using the aahaad to establish matters of belief, as is the claim of some deviant groups.

There are many groups who claim that they represent Islaam. However, when their teachings are investigated one finds that they are far from the straight path which was so clearly defined for us by the Messenger (S).

This should not come to us as a surprise because the Messenger of Allaah (S) predicted that his Ummah would divide into many sects. He (S) said:

The Jews divided into seventy-one sects, and the Christians divided into seventy-two sects. My Ummah will divide into seventy-three different sects, all of which will be in the Fire except one: Those who are on the like of what I and my companions are on at this time. [at-Tirmidthi; hasan]

This hadith should raise our guard and make us ponder. It should also prove for us that the deviant groups and their followers will outnumber those who are on the correct way.

It is every person's duty to investigate and find the true Islaam. We advise all those who are trapped into the belief of not using hadith aahaad for substantiation in matters of creed to make a concerted effort to refer to the beliefs of the best generation, i.e., the Companions of the Prophet (S) and those who followed them. After this investigation they should compare their findings with their beliefs. There is no doubt that they would find that the beliefs of the companions and those who followed them are totally different from those who adhere to such innovative principles.

May Allaah guide us all to the truth, help us to see it clearly, and to follow it. Aameen.